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thickness of said composite membrane is at most 0.4 mils.

242. (Amended) The method [composite membrane] of claim 218, wherein the thickness of said composite membrane is at most 0.3 mils.

243. (Amended) The method [composite membrane] of claim 218, wherein the thickness of said composite membrane is at most 0.2 mils.

244. (Amended) The method [composite membrane] of claim 218, wherein the thickness of said composite membrane is at most 0.1 mils.

REMARKS

Claims 99-254 are pending in the application. The Examiner indicates that claims 100-189, as filed in the Second Preliminary Amendment, have been renumbered as claims 99-188. The Examiner also indicates that claims 190-226 (First Claim), as filed in the Third Preliminary Amendment, have been respectively renumbered 189-225. Applicants' records have been changed to reflect this renumbering. Claims 226 (Second Claim) -254 have not been renumbered. The Examiner is thanked for his effort in changing the claim numbering in Applicants "Second" and "Third" Preliminary Amendments.

In the Restriction Requirement issued October 22, 1999, the Examiner noted that it is

unclear in which group, renumbered claims 182-188 and 241-244 belong. The preamble of renumbered claims 181-184 has been amended to reflect that those claims depend from renumbered method claim 157. The preamble of renumbered claims 185-188 has been amended to reflect that those claims depend from fuel cell claim 167. The preamble of claims 241-244 has been amended to reflect that those claims depend from renumbered method claim 217. Applicants acknowledge that the Examiner has already classified renumbered claims 181-188, and claims 241-244 in the appropriate groups. Applicants respectfully submit that it is no longer unclear in which groups claims 181-188 and 241-244 belong.

**RESPONSE TO THE RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT:**

On October 22, 1999, the Examiner issued a requirement that the Applicants elect one of the following inventions:

- Group I - Claims 99-143, 172-179, 189-216, 233-240 and 245-254 drawn to a composite membrane,
- Group II - Claims 144-162, 171, 182-184, 217-227 and 241-244 drawn to a method of manufacturing, or
- Group III - Claims 163-170, 185-188, and 228-232 drawn to a fuel cell.

In response, Applicants hereby provisionally elect the invention of Group I, Claims 99-143, 172-179, 189-216, 233-240 and 245-254, and reserve their right to file divisional applications relating to the non-elected inventions.

U.S. Serial No. 09/209,932  
Amendment and Provisional Election

Docket No. 0769-4582US1

**AUTHORIZATIONS**

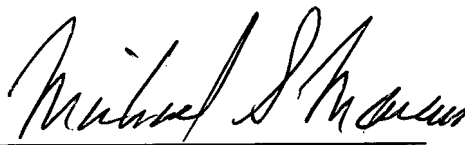
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Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: November 12, 1999

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